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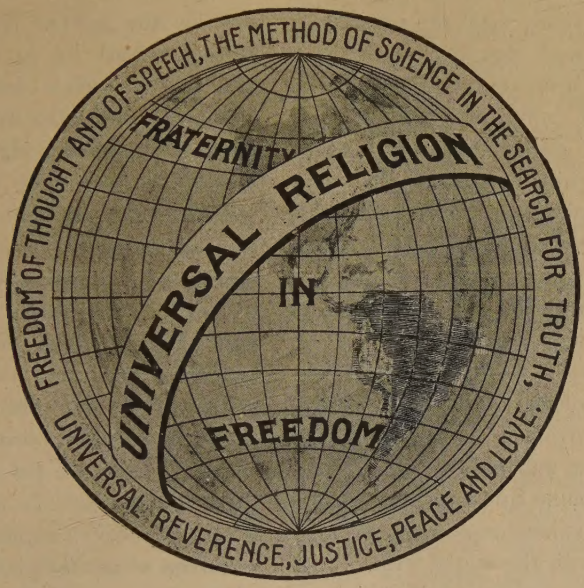
FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND OF SPEECH, THE METHOD OF SCIENCE IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH,
FRATERNITY
UNIVERSAL RELIGION
IN
FREEDOM
UNIVERSAL REVERENCE, JUSTICE, PEACE AND LOVE.

CONTENTS

Theosophy and Reincarnation - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Demoralizing Traditionalism - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
MODERN OCCULTISM (continued)—VII. Christian Science and the New Testament Miracles. VIII.—Christian Science and its Priestess.
EDITORIAL.—Dr. Hedley Hall.—Fellowship with Unitarians.

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THEOSOPHY AND REINCARNATION*

"Thirty years ago the utterances of Darwin and Spencer, of Huxley and Tyndall created a crisis in the domain of religion. As Madam Blavatsky said, these utterances "left humanity like an orphan crying for guidance and light," left humanity "with outstretched hands asking for some system of philosophy and religion that would satisfy the human soul."

As a direct result of that crisis, thousands of men and women drifted away from Christianity into Agnosticism and Materialism. Then, at length, came Spiritualism, with its gospel of spirit-intercourse, promising to furnish the world with a way out of Agnosticism and Materialism, and also with something better than Christianity.

A little later came Madam Blavatsky, declaring that the system known as Spiritualism was wanting and that she, by will-power, could produce all the phenomena supposed to be produced by departed spirits. Her substitute for Spiritualism was Theosophy.

In its entirety this system is somewhat elaborate and complicated, rather intricate and involved, so that all I can hope to do in the time at my disposal is to sketch in broad outline the salient features of the system. And in so doing I shall take my materials from the great fountain-sources, the works of Madam Blavatsky, Wm. Q. Judge and Mrs. Besant.

First, then, at the very root of this system there lies the belief in an eternal existence, an impersonal principle; changeless, formless, devoid of personality, devoid of limitation; a principle that manifests itself as spirit and as matter throughout the universe.

The Universe (to come to the superstructure of the system) evolves in seven separate stages, or on seven separate "planes," each one of which, says Madam Blavatsky, has "its own objectivity and its own subjectivity, its own space and its own time; its own consciousness, its own set of senses." *

Corresponding to these seven stages or planes of the universe there are the seven divisions of man, man being a "septenate individuality," correlated to the seven planes of the universe. For each one of these seven divisions of man there is a Sanscrit name, but I will not bother you with these, giving you simply their English equiva-

*Stenographically reported.

Key to Theosophy p. 89.

lents: 1, Physical Body; 2, Life-Principle; 3, Astral Body; 4, Animal Soul; 5, Man; 6, Soul; 7, Spirit.

The Life-Principle animates the physical body. The Astral Body invests the Life-Principle. The Animal Soul is the seat of all our various passions. These four are material in nature and therefore perishable; nevertheless, during their existence they serve as instruments for the remaining three which are immaterial and therefore, imperishable. Essential man then, is a triune being, consisting of Soul, Mind and Spirit—the last being the highest, a spark from the Absolute Spirit; a spark that all human beings possess and which therefore constitutes the basis of the Theosophical doctrine of the "brotherhood of the humans."

You see, then, that one's individuality is a sort of omnibus that carries a number of passengers through the journey of life, one or more stepping off at the successive stations.

At the first station, called Death, the physical body gets off.

At the next station, called Kamaloca, (which is analogous to the Roman Catholic Purgatory) the other three perishable passengers alight, the remaining triad continuing the journey to the next station, called Devachan, which is analogous to the orthodox Christian's Heaven.

Here, Mrs. Besant says,* the average soul remains for about fifteen hundred years enjoying ethereal bliss and garnering all the experiences of its earthly existence until at last the time comes for the soul to go back again to earth, there to be drawn to certain parents corresponding to its condition, and entering the body of their new-born babe, only however, to repeat the former journey, the septenate man getting off at the various stations as in the past, returning to earth innumberable times until, at last, the soul has become fitted for Nirvana.

Theoretically it is possible for man to avoid repetitions of this journey, but practically it has to be made over and over again before the soul is fully purified. And in each successive earth-life the real man is known to others as a new personality but in the whole stretch of eternity he is one individual, conscious of an identity not dependent on name, form or recollection of personalities.†

According, then, to this Theosophical system, it appears that the common fate of the great majority of human beings is to be reincarnated indefinitely throughout the future, until at last, after innumerable reincarnations, the soul shall be fitted for its final home in the Absolute.

*"What is Theosophy?" By Annie Besant; p. 6.
†Wm. Q. Judge's, article on Theosophy in Johnson's Cyclopaedia.

Human souls must reincarnate, we are told, because it is absolutely impossible, within the limits of the short span of human life, to gain all the experience, all the evolution of which the soul is capable.

How can a soul, harrassed by circumstances, trammelled by environments, beguiled by temptation, how shall such a soul deserve immediate perpetual Heaven or perpetual Hell? It must live again on earth and there work out its own salvation, reaping what it has sown and sowing what in the next incarnation it will reap.

In other words, the moral universe, like the physical, is subject to the law of cause and effect, which law is called in Theosophy, "Karma." It means that in harmony with an absolutely relentless fate every result is as absolutely certain as the deed whence it sprang. To illustrate.

If you are suffering any affliction now, you can console yourself with the thought that it is because you did something wrong in the body that you were in previous to your present one. If you are rich and happy, it is because you have merited this by virtuous performances. It is this law of Karma that Theosophists ceaselessly sound in the dull ears of the indifferent world.

And since the span of our earthly activity is altogether too contracted for the complete working out of this law of rewards and punishments, they say we must come back to earth again and again, until the demands of justice have been absolutely complied with.

Theosophy, therefore, in opposition to the Christian doctrines of the forgiveness of sins, heaven and hell, election and predestination, teaches the law of Karma and reincarnation, according to which every single act meets with its inevitable result, man coming back to earth again and again until he has exhausted the possibilities of earth's experience and fitted himself for amalgamation with the Absolute.

What shall we say of this doctrine of reincarnation, which Mr. Wm. Q. Judge, regards as "the very base Theosophy?"

In the first place, we must say of it that it is nothing new. It was generally believed among the Orientals, especially in India, by the Hindus and the Buddhists. Nay more, the theory of reincarnation (together with other Theosophical doctrines) was held in the eighth century by the heretical Christian sect known as the Gnostics. I read not long ago an article written by a scholarly writer on the origin of modern occultism.*

He makes a most interesting series of comparisons between Madam Blavatsky's ideas and the doctrines of the Gnostics.

Concerning the connection between the two systems he says:

"I think that if the doctrines of the Theosophical Society are compared with what has come down to us of the Gnostic tenets, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the latter system is not only the same in all points as the elder, but that the coincidence is too close to be the result of accident."

Referring to reincarnation the writer remarks:

"In like manner, the theory of purification by reincarnations, which Colonel Olcott defends in his lectures, and which Mr. Sinnett has elaborated in "The Occult World" and "Esoteric Buddhism," can be found very tersely given in the following passage of the "Pistis Sophia," where, after describing the passage of the soul of the dead through the several spiritual worlds, it is brought before "the Judge, the Virgin of Light. And she trieth that soul; and in case she shall find that soul to be sinful . . . she delivereth it to one of her receivers, who will see that it be placed IN A BODY BEFITTING THE SINS THAT IT HATH COMMITTED. And verily I say unto you, she shall not let the soul be released from the changes of its bodies until it shall have accomplished its uttermost cycle in the shapes whereof it may be deserving."

After citing other passages from the 'Pistis Sophia' the chief work of the Gnostics, Mr. Legge says:

"Any one who will take the trouble to refer to the works from which I quoted above will have no difficulty in recognizing in the Gnostic writings nearly every term used by Theosophists which is not, for obvious reasons, expressed in an Oriental language."

In closing his series of comparisons, he makes the following unequivocal statement.

"Taking all these facts together, they seem to form a very strong proof that the system of the Theosophical Society has not been handed down from prehistoric times by secret and mysterious means, but has, on the contrary, been copied (en bloc) from the relics of Gnosticism."

But be this contention valid or not, the fact remains that the Theosophical system is not new.

2. There are a great many Theosophists who look on reincarnation as something most desirable, something to be looked forward to more than aught else in the world. But the Hindus and the Buddhists did not look on reincarnation in that light. On the contrary, the Hindu and Buddhist thought it the dreariest and most dismal prospect conceivable. Why? Simply because of the uncertainty that attaches to man's reincarnations. No one can say what kind of incarnation he will have next. If only he could ac-

*By F. Legge, in "Littell's Living Age." (1886)

curately balance the good and the bad in his life he might then have some definite conception as to what his next incarnation would be. But no human being can determine to a nicety the balance of good and evil in his make-up. Consequently, no one knows what his next incarnation will be. Another reason for regarding the prospect of reincarnation as undesirable is that no one knows how many times he will have to return to earth. He has therefore no sense of rest. The Hindu and the Buddhist deplore the fact that they do not know whether they are going to be reborn a thousand or a million times, and thus they feel a painful sense of unrest. Is it any wonder then, that the supreme object in life to the Hindu or Buddhist is to get rid of this ceaseless process of being reborn? You who are familiar with the teachings of Buddha will remember that the chief thing he did was to teach his people the "noble fourfold path." What was it? It was the path of escape from ceaseless births and rebirths into the perpetual rest of Nirvana.

3. When I compare the doctrine of reincarnation with the corresponding teaching of Christianity I very frankly confess that if I had to choose between them I would prefer the former. Christianity teaches that our destiny is determined by the will of a Deity who is partial, and who exercises favoritism. Theosophy teaches that our human destiny is determined in strictest accord with the demands of absolute justice. Christianity teaches that we are the victims of an arbitrary Will from which there is no escape. Theosophy teaches that every man is the arbiter of his own destiny. Christianity offers no satisfactory explanation of the inequalities of human existence. Theosophy interprets them all in terms of law and order, of cause and effect.

But, with all its advantages, the doctrine of reincarnation has also very decided disadvantages, limitations, defects.

I shall have time only to refer to these, I cannot dwell on them in detail.

In the first place, theosophists tell us that reincarnation is a fact as fully demonstrated and proven as any other known fact. But certainly none of the proofs which they proffer can be construed as equivalent to demonstration. For instance, the antiquity and universality of the belief in reincarnations is no proof of its truth. Has not many an error been both ancient and universal? Nor would professed memory of a previous incarnation prove its reality. Only a few persons claim to have such memory. Consequently it cannot count as proving the truth of rein-

carnation for any other persons than themselves. Such isolated individual declarations of "past memories" have no probative value. Again, it is said that child-prodigies, adult-weaklings and the difference in people cannot be explained unless reincarnation be a fact. But every educated evolutionist knows that the principle of evolution and its corollaries furnish an adequate explanation of these facts. Nor again will it do to say that reincarnation is a fact because theosophists "feel" it,are "conscious" of it, "supersensuously" know it. All such expressions are simply abuses of the dictionary. No one can be said to be conscious NOW of a future fact. How can one KNOW now what does not yet exist?

Another and graver difficulty besetting the theory of reincarnation is this. If karma is what necessitates reincarnation, whence came the first incarnation, seeing that there was no previous karma to produce it? This is one of the crucial questions for which Theosophy has no SATISFACTORY answer. It is a question of first-rate importance, because everything depends on that original existence in which karma was made for the first time.

Theosophy teaches that when we incarnate again we shall have no memory of our previous incarnation. "If we had," says Dr. A. P. Sinnett, "the system would fail in its operation and would find itself bereft of the qualifications which render it endurable to the gradually evolving entity"* Well, if all memory of my temptations, disciplines, struggles, is to be forever blotted out, then all the moral value of my progressive being is lost for me. If, when I reincarnate, I have no recollection of what I have suffered, of what I have mastered, of what I have conquered, then the supreme inspiration in my moral progress is lost for me. Had I to believe that I am to enter another life and at the same time forget all about this one, forget who I was, the steps of my development, who my dearest ones were, who the master-inspirers of my life, I certainly could not desire it as a possession; it would mean absolutely nothing to me. But there is another and still more serious defect in Theosophy. It has a place for justice, but none for forgiveness. It has no plan for reconciling divine justice with divine pardon, and I make bold to say that any system which repudiates forgiveness can never satisfy the demand of the human heart. It may be a sublime theory, a grand intellectual system, but it cannot be of help to this hoping, struggling, toiling, aspiring humanity.

"Lord be merciful to me, a sinner." This is the despairing cry that

*"Religions of the world" p 519.

goes up from the soul of every earnest man and woman, but in Theosophy I find no answer to that cry. On the contrary I find the opposite doctrine, that we are in the hands of an impersonal principle and an inviolable law.

Now, I admit the inviolable law, but one thing there is that my heart requires; it is that down into the depths of my ashes and my gloom there shall stream at least one ray of living light, that down into my cell of humiliation there shall flood a stream of Divine pity, so that while I bare my back to the scourge of Karma, I shall not wholly wither under the scorching look of the Infinite whose child I am.

Divine Justice and Divine Pardon must be somehow reconciled, else, "Earth were darkness at the core And dust and ashes all that is."

But such reconciliation is impossible in a system that puts an "impersonal Principle" at the heart of things.

That there is a profound truth in the law of Karma no one can gainsay, but I do not see that reincarnation is a NECESSARY sequal to it. When the good man fails, he succeeds. He succeeds in the one and only kind of genuine success; the maintenance of his self-respect, the preservation of his character, the keeping of his soul alive. When the bad man succeeds, he fails. He fails in the one and only kind of genuine failure; the collapse of character, the bankruptcy of self-respect, the insolvency of soul. And when at last death claims them, I believe that they both pass on with all the memory of their experience into the near-by spirit-world, taking with them all of heaven and all of hell that they have in them at the moment of death, and, in the continuing life, developing their individuality in accordance with the laws of soul-growth as we know them here. In support of such a belief I find the two grandest generalizations of modern science, both deduced from the fact of evolution. One of these is the unity of the universe the other is the unity of life. The universe is one. There are no wholly dissimilar worlds known to us. An astronomer from our earth looking into space from Mars would have a familiar outlook. A chemist analyzing the constituent elements of Uranus would find them like those he knows here. A geologist exploring Mercury would find stratifications there like those observed here. So also life is one. There are no wholly dissimilar life-forms in the orderly evolution of life. Man is connected by inseparable links with the lowest life-forms. Hence the inference that the next life will not be wholly new but a higher unfolding of this life. Nay more, at each higher step in the evolutionary

process from moneron to man we observe hints, prophecies of what is to be in the next beyond. So our present life fore-shadows what our future life will be. I am an evolutionist; first, last and always an evolutionist. And evolution teaches as its grand conclusion, the unity of the universe and the unity of human life. It meets my demand for absolute justice. It explains the sorrow, the suffering and the evil of the world. It floods my being with inspiration and with aspiration. Best of all, it points to the immortal progressive life as the supreme desideratum and highest aim of our being.

DEMORALIZING TRADITIONALISM.

BY J. H. SHERWOOD.

A recent issue of a religious paper contained a criticism of the late Col. Ingersoll by Wm. Gribbon of Brooklyn, N. Y., in which he passed judgment upon Mr. Ingersoll. He also wrote: "If you reject the atonement of the Lord Jesus or his vicarious suffering, as Unitarians do, I do not wonder at defending Ingersoll." Mr. Gribbon is doubtless a well meaning man and so were the men who conducted the Inquisition and burned witches and hung Quakers. They were ignorant and bigoted miscreants and to compare them with the average barbarian would be unjust to the latter as they have never been charged with persecuting for differences in theology and have not to answer for the slaughter of nearly 25000000 human beings because they did not conform to the theology of the so termed "Orthodox." The same reckless kind of people crucified Christ and stoned the prophets. If Gribbon will read the declarations of the Nazarene he may learn that he simply stated the theology of the "Chosen People," and repeatedly asserted that keeping the law "saved." Read his directions to the lawyer. Christ also declared against sacrifice as did the prophets and demanded mercy not sacrifice—"He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Those who discredit the laws of nature by teaching that the wrongdoer can escape just punishment for infractions of the moral law are dangerous teachers and are doing the work of the Devil. Certain declarations of great souls who, as Rev. Dr. Munger said in his great address at the Parliament of religions, "stand too near God to be deceived," should be remembered—that of Voltaire—"Love the good God and be good," and that of Abraham—"Shall not the Lord of the earth do right."

MODERN OCCULTISM.

Synopses of Discourses recently spoken at Tacoma and Seattle. Reports of the six preceding discourses in the series appeared in the February and March numbers. Reports of the remaining three will appear in the May number.

REINCARNATION.

(February 24th)

The greater part of this discourse constitutes the first article of this number. The discourse was stenographically reported and has been published, with some important additions, in pamphlet form.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND THE NEW TESTAMENT MIRACLES.

(March 3rd)

Christian Science is, in part, a system of therapeutics and as such roots itself in the New Testament miracles of healing. It is Christian because it accepts Jesus as the Son of God and as the great Physician. It is science because, by studying the scriptures, it finds there a science of healing taught and practiced by Jesus and committed to his disciples with the understanding that it is an integral part of true discipleship to heal. Christian Science justifies its entrance into the world on the plea that the Christian churches have neglected the duty of discipleship have ignored Jesus' explicit command to "heal the sick," as well as to "preach the gospel." Christian Scientists accept Jesus as their ultimate authority. They take him at his word, believe that he said what has been reported and they use all texts at their face value. They ask no questions as to the origin of the New Testament, the authorship, date and composition of its books, the age in which they were written, the influence of the Messianic expectation on religious thought and conduct. To all such fundamental questions Christian Scientists are indifferent. Yet all such questions touching the sources of our information about Jesus are of vital and paramount importance. The leading New Testament scholars, most of whom are Orthodox, tell us that the gospels are as far away from the time of Jesus as we are from the time of Dryden and Pope, that we have not the word of an eye-witness for a single recorded miracle, not one; that the New Testament record consists of the original message minus what has been irrecoverably lost, plus "reportorial refraction," plus traditional coloring, plus translational changes, plus transcribing changes, plus doctrinal changes. The record is a ruin restored, some of the original bricks remain as they were, some have been reshaped, some have disappeared, some are absolutely new. We know neither the names nor the dates of any of the gospel writers. As Rev. M. J. Savage has said—"all we know is

that somebody believed that somebody else saw something strange somewhere else at some other time." This, of course, does not imply that the gospel writers were dishonest. They simply believed that what they had been told and what they had read was true.

Of the thirty miracles recorded in the New Testament there are only two or three that we have any reason to doubt. And we doubt their reality only because the evidence for them is altogether insufficient. The testimony offered in support of them is such that no modern court of justice would recognize it as valid. We do not deny the possibility of miracles. Who will dare to say what is impossible in the realm of exhaustless boundless Nature? On the other hand be it remembered that Jesus and his contemporaries had no conception of natural law. To them questions of probability and improbability were not known because one thing was just as probable as another.

Concerning the miracles of healing to which Christian Scientists refer it should be noted that most of them have no physical, but only a moral connotation. The word healing in most cases refers to moral and spiritual, not physical health, as the context plainly shows. According to the scholarship of our best teachers on the subject (and by the way most of them are Orthodox!) it appears that most of the miracles of healing have no physical implication whatever. The word healing has a moral rather than a physical import in the great majority of the narratives. Thus, for instance, when Matthew says (XIV. 14) that "Jesus saw a great multitude and had compassion on them and healed their sick," the corresponding passage in Mark (VI. 34) relating the same incident, substitutes "taught" for "healed." Again, in the parable of the sower, when quoting Isaiah, Matthew reads "lest I should heal them;" whereas Mark says, "lest I should forgive their sins." Again, in the charge to his disciples Jesus says, "heal the sick, freely ye did receive, freely give" i. e. as they had freely received spiritual life so should they freely give it. Edwin Abbott, the eminent Orthodox critic says, "wherever Jesus is said to have healed a great multitude, it is moral or spiritual cure that was effected," When certain critics objected to Jesus' association with publicans and sinners his answer was, "they that are whole have no need of a physician but they that are sick," a very clear case of the use of metaphor, Jesus being the healer of men's moral and spiritual diseases. Similarly the expressions, blindness, deafness, lameness, were used metaphorically for various forms of moral and spiritual impotence. Even the word

"dead" was often used to describe a moral or spiritual state. "This my son was dead and is alive again," says the prodigal's father. Such symbolism runs all through the teachings of Paul as he addresses believers who were once "dead in tresspasses and sins" but are "risen and alive unto God," "Let the dead bury their dead," said Jesus, adopting the form of speech current in the Targum and other Jewish literature of the period. Jesus was in the habit of speaking metaphorically, using physical terms to express moral ideas, as was customary in those days. As for the remaining miracles that are purely physical in their nature, it should be noted that in Palestine at that time scientific medicine was not known; that Jesus and his contemporaries thought that disease was caused by demons and evil spirits; that the cure therefore, was to exorcise them by a gesture, a word, a command. The best physician, therefore, was the man of strong moral force, capable of expelling evil spirits that caused disease. Again, all the cases recorded are nervous disorders, and these were very common then, because of the great excitement caused by the Messianic expectation. Finally, no report is anywhere given of any failure in healing on the part of Jesus or the disciples or the early church fathers. Yet we know that the day of failure came because scientific medicine would never have been inaugurated had the healing method of Jesus been invariably successful. Why should men have begun to study disease, the relations of mind and body, the countless ills to which human flesh is subject if every single case could be cured by a word, or a prayer, or an act of faith? Given the particular nervous disease mentioned in the gospels, given Jesus' theory of their cause and his mode of cure is such as our skilled physicians know to be successful. As for other diseases, not purely nervous, being successfully treated by that method.raises the question of the limits of Christian Science as a system of therapeutics which will be discussed in a later discourse.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND ITS PRIESTESS.

(March 10th)

In Christian Science we see a movement in many respects analogous to the ecclesiasticism of the Roman Catholic church. The pontifical status of Leo XIII is no more august or assured than that of the petticoated pope of Christian Science. Her decrees have all the air of authority and infallibility that marks those of the reigning pope of Rome. And if she has no apostolic succession behind her, she poses as the sole, correct representative of the Christ and his gospel. Her

full name is Mary Moss, Baker, Glover, Patterson, Eddy; the last three names being those of her three husbands. Like Mohammed, who claimed that his Koran is a divine revelation, though its contents are clearly drawn from earlier Jewish and Christian literature, so Mrs. Eddy claims that "Science and Health" is a "divine.final revelation," though Mr. J. A. Dresser has demonstrated in his "True History of Mental Science" that the alleged revelation has its source in the manuscripts of Mr. P. P. Quimby, loaned to Mrs. Eddy in 1866.

Opinions differ as to the character of this unique woman. Some think she is the victim of a species of insanity called paranoia. Some think she is an impostor,—a millionaire grown enormously wealthy by preying on the credulity of her followers. I confess I know not the heart of Mrs Eddy. I would not denounce her as a charlatan; rather would I believe she is honest and sincere, ready to give acceptable reasons for her seemingly conscienceless actions.

Chief among the causes that explain the rise and growth of Christian Science is the materialism that so widely prevailed forty years ago. Spiritualism and Theosophy had arisen as a reaction against it and after them came Christian Science. It was a revolt against materialism in the domain of medicine where devotion to materialistic theories of disease had blinded the eyes of physicians to psychological factors in the art of healing. It was also a rebellion against materialism in social life where absorption in the pleasures of the senses had left no place for spirituality. Christian Science, in this rebellion, committed the error of rushing to the opposite extreme of idealism, denying the existence of matter, of disease, of body; disputing the efficacy of drugs and chemicals and reviving, in somewhat halting fashion, the philosophy of Berkeley and Plato. But, say what we will in criticism of the movement, there is no denying the fact that it has cured thousands of cases of real or imaginary physical illness, and also of moral and spiritual disease, such as ill-temper, bad habits, worry, irritability, impatience; producing a most beneficial effect upon the character of multitudes who have come under its healing spell. Indeed, too much cannot be said in praise of the beneficent effect which both physically and morally this movement has had upon hosts of intelligent, educated, well-to-do people. For Christian Science numbers among its adherents over 500000 people, most of them well educated and well off. Over 400 churches have already been built, a very remarkable record for the brief history of thirty-five years which the movement has had.

In so far, then, as Christian Science has achieved and still achieves beneficent physical and spiritual results, it is not to be set down as a 'sham' or 'humbug' but to be soberly investigated as a system of therapeutics which contains, despite all its crudities and vagaries, some germ of truth, else it could not live. For all error in this world is kept alive only by the truth-germ which it contains. And if medical practitioners wish to kill this movement they can do it most effectively, by simply absorbing and assimilating its truth-germ and incorporating it into their own scientific therapeutics. Not a few physicians have already done this and when all have done it Christian Science, as a system of healing, will be known no more, for its element of truth will be a recognized part of medical science everywhere. As a religion, Christian Science presents a series of six tenets which all who join the denomination must sign. The foundation tenet is, "We take the scriptures for our guide to eternal life." But so does every other sect of Christianity. The difference lies in their interpretation of the scriptures. Fanciful to a degree is the interpretation which Christian Science puts on Bible-names. Mrs. Eddy devotes the eighteenth chapter of "Science and Health," to the "metaphysical interpretation of Bible-terms, giving their spiritual sense, which is also their original meaning" (p 570). But the Hebrew lexicon gives no warrant whatever for her interpretation of such names, for instance, as Gihon, Babel, Benjamin, Hiddekel, Judah, Noah, Thummim, Zion. Surely it is not too much to say that it would be a good deal more scientific and not at all less Christian if Mrs. Eddy were to study the results of modern Biblical criticism and then apply them when interpreting the scriptures.

EDITORIAL.

DR. HEDLEY HALL.

Rev. Hedley Hall, Ph. D. recently assistant to Rev. H. W. Thomas, D. D. of the People's church, Chicago, has been invited by the trustees of the Seattle Society for Universal Religion to become its resident minister. Mr. Hall has accepted and will assume his duties April 7th. He comes highly recommended as a scholar, a clear and deep thinker, an eloquent and engaging speaker. He is a young man, still in the thirties; energetic, enthusiastic and gifted with that very essential requisite, a genius for organizing. The Seattle Society is to be heartily congratulated on having secured the services of one so well equipped for the work. And Dr. Hall, in turn, must be considered fortunate in the privilege of

this opportunity to promote, in so fine a field, the cause of free, spiritual and universal religion

To find a minister for the Seattle Society has been Mr. Martin's cherished hope ever since he founded the organization, two years ago. Now he will be at liberty to start another such Society in one of the other neighboring cities. Sixteen ministers applied for this position in Seattle. Since the supply so greatly exceeds the demand we may confidently continue the work of organization, believing that in the near future a North-west Conference of Free Churches or Independent Societies will be established—the forerunner of a National Conference.

FELLOWSHIP WITH UNITARIANS.

The circulation of one thousand copies of Mr. Martin's discourse "Why Unitarianism fails to satisfy" ought to accomplish the two objects of its publication. First, to indicate clearly those vital points of difference in the position of the two movements, which justified independent organization. Second, to demonstrate that we did not wish to be disfellowshiped from the Unitarian denomination, but, on the contrary, would gladly have retained our connection with the body were it not that the price of loyalty to our cherished principles and ideals could not be honorably paid for the privilege. We proposed to the American Unitarian Association the publication in its "year-book" of a separate list of Free Churches or Independent Societies and the insertion of our Society's name in that list. We did this to assure our Unitarian brethern of our sympathy with the practical aims of the denomination and of our desire to retain as far as possible the fellowship we had enjoyed and profited from. But the Association did not see fit either to accept our proposal or to grant our request. Hence there was nothing for us to do but to accept our enforced isolation with the hope that at some later day Unitarian hospitality would reconsider the request. That day seems near at hand. One of the directors of the A. U. A. incidentally learning of the rejection of our proposal eight years ago, suggested that we resubmit our proposition to the present board of directors, believing that it would now be more favorably regarded. His suggestion will soon be acted upon and we await with confidence the result.

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